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APR 17 1959  
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Dear Neil:

We had postponed making a further reply to your letter of March 16 to Acting Secretary Herter and the enclosed draft "Statement of Policy on Berlin and Germany" believing comment on them might more usefully be made in the light of the recent discussions of the four Foreign Ministers in Washington. Governor Herter sent you a brief reply on March 27, just prior to these discussions.

I do not believe it is correct to represent the Soviets as invariably playing an active role and ourselves as invariably playing a passive one. Estimates as to where the initiative lies, or as to what is the challenge and what the response, are necessarily subjective. One might take the view--and the Soviets possibly do so--that the recent Soviet moves in Germany have been an attempt to maintain the status quo in the face of Western attempts to change it. One might thus argue that the Soviet "free city" proposal is designed to eliminate the disruptive influence which West Berlin, thanks to our initiative, exerts upon the Soviet Zone, and that the proposal for a peace treaty with the "two German states," or with a "confederation" of the two, as well as the threat of a separate peace treaty with the so-called German Democratic Republic, are responses to the Western initiative in pressing for German reunification.

However, I am entirely in agreement that the situation requires imaginative thinking and that we must be both alert in seizing the initiative and bold in carrying out proposals which have the effect of keeping the Soviets, rather than ourselves, on the defensive.

The draft

The Honorable  
Neil H. McElroy,  
Secretary of Defense.

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Rev. <i>[initials]</i>
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The draft "Statement of Policy on Berlin and Germany" has been brought to the attention of those officers of the Department of State who are working on the German problem, including the Department of State representatives on the Four-Power Working Group. In view of both its origin and its content, the draft will be given serious study in connection with the development of the position for the May 11 Foreign Minister's conference with the Soviet Union.

Your thoughtfulness in making the draft "Statement of Policy on Berlin and Germany" available to the Department of State is very much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

ROBERT MURPHY  
Acting Secretary

S/S - RO

APR 17 1959

A true copy of signed original

*M. Murphy*

EUR:GER:GPA:TDMoKiernan:caw 4/13/59  
Retyped:S/S-RO 4/16/59

GER - Mr. Wigglerman *RHM*  
EUR - Mr. Kohler *RHM*  
L/EUR - Mr. Wehmeyer (in substance)  
G. M. Murphy *RHM*

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By *CAU* NARA DATE *6/5/9*